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# CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS

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## USAID/CAR Bi-weekly Report

### Kazakhstan

#### **USAID Provides a Model for Education Reform in Kazakhstan**

USAID's Civic Education Program was recently invited to make a presentation on its Civic Education course and textbook to Kazakhstan's education officials, experts, and specialists who are designing the reform of the country's education system. In an effort to modernize the education system in Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Education would like to use many of the elements of the civic education textbook and methodology as a model for developing new courses and textbooks for all subject areas. The participants of the presentation concluded that Civic Education should be included as one of the core components of the "Social Science" block that will be mandatory for all students from grades five to twelve.



*Students in nearly 800 schools across Kazakhstan learn civics from USAID-funded textbooks.*

*Photo: IFES*

The USAID-funded Civic Education textbook for 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grades is currently used in nearly 800 schools in all 14 oblasts of Kazakhstan. The textbook and the course were developed as part of USAID's Civic Education Program, implemented by IFES.

### Kyrgyz Republic

#### **New Anti-trafficking Program Launched in the Kyrgyz Republic**

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) opened a new USAID-funded anti-trafficking program in Kyrgyzstan. This project is a follow-up to USAID's project Combating Trafficking in Persons in Central Asia: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution (Legislation) implemented by Winrock International and completed in December 2005. As part of a larger, regional program, IOM will continue to cooperate with NGOs in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, to disseminate information on the risks of human trafficking and illegal migration, organize and facilitate trainings with target populations, and provide assistance to victims of trafficking. In cooperation with partner NGOs, IOM will facilitate victims' return to and reintegration in their home countries; health care; and legal assistance to the trafficked persons from the moment they are released in their destination countries through their return home. To improve their ability to find jobs in local markets, victims will receive vocational training.



*The opening ceremony on February 16, 2006, was attended by NGO leaders from all regions of the Kyrgyz Republic.*

*Photo: IOM*



## **USAID Introduces Legal Ethics Training**

In February 2006, the Ministry of Education of the Kyrgyz Republic approved the Professional Legal Ethics of a Lawyer manual to be used for teaching legal ethics at the law departments in country's higher education institutions. The manual was developed by a group of ABA/CEELI-led university professors and scientists for a pilot legal ethics course under the USAID Legal Education Reform Program. Currently, the course is piloted in eight universities.

The USAID Legal Education Reform Program, implemented by ABA/CEELI, supports development of a more skilled, ethical and proactive next generation of lawyers in Kyrgyzstan. The Legal Ethics manual and course fill a gap in the current legal education system by focusing on critical thinking, ethical behavior of future judges, prosecutors, and attorneys. Legal Ethics Course is the only discipline that addresses the issue of interrelations between state and society in the sphere of law enforcement and anticorruption.

## **The Eurasia Foundation Opens New Entity in Bishkek**

On February 23, 2006, the U.S.-based Eurasia Foundation formally announced the opening of a new locally-registered legal entity, the Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia (EFCA). The ceremony in Bishkek was attended by representatives of the Kyrgyz Government, U.S. Ambassadors to the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan, former U.S. Congressman William Frenzel, USAID and other donor representatives, diplomats, and members of civil society and the business community. The new entity will build on 12 years of Eurasia Foundation's development expertise in the region to mobilize community resources and strengthen local institutions. Like its founder, EFCA will continue providing resources and expertise to budding social and civic initiatives throughout the region, under a guidance of its Board of Trustees, which consists of international and regional business and civic leaders.

## **Tajikistan**

### **USAID Provides Assistance to Avalanche Victims**

Snow avalanches recently struck several villages in the mountainous district of Jirgital, Tajikistan. Initial reports stated that 18 people had died, seven were hospitalized, and ten homes were destroyed. Two Mercy Corps pick-up trucks carrying wheat flour and vegetable oil donated by USAID left in an NGO convoy as soon as it became clear that no immediate help was getting through to the affected area. The food came from the stock of Mercy Corps' USAID-funded Development Assistance Program, which works in the Rasht Valley to overcome food insecurity through agriculture, food distribution, and health programming.

Mercy Corps distributed 1,400 kg of wheat flour and 144 liters of vegetable oil to the families worst affected by the avalanches. Ration sizes were based on numbers of remaining family and the needs of the relatives hosting the survivors. USAID's food convoy was the first outside assistance to reach the avalanche affected village.



*USAID's food convoy was the first outside assistance to reach the villages.*

*Photo: Mercy Corps*

### **A New Pledge Registry Expands Economic Opportunities in Tajikistan**

On March 1, 2006, the Ministry of Justice of Tajikistan announced an official launch of the new Pledge Registry, developed with extensive assistance from the USAID Commercial Law Project. The new pledge registry will hold public records of moveable property and will enable lenders to establish their legal rights to the property used as collateral. Lenders in Tajikistan have been unwilling to give credit against moveable property due to the lack of an efficient and reliable pledge registration system. By increasing security of lending transactions, the registry will help small businesses obtain financing and reduce the interest rates on loans.

The USAID project, implemented by ARD/Chechi, provided technical assistance in establishing the registry office; procured all necessary equipment, including registry software and computer equipment that runs the registry; and helped the Ministry of Justice in preparing the technical regulations that will govern operation of the registry. To ensure smooth start-up of the registry, the USAID project conducted comprehensive training for registry staff and organized a series of informational seminars for managers and credit officers of banks, micro-credit organizations, and other lenders to explain how the registry will work and how it will benefit them.

### **Tajik Firm Finds Buyers in Afghanistan**

Participation in the Rebuild Afghanistan Exhibition was an excellent investment for a Tajik company Doro, a client of the USAID Enterprise Development Project (EDP), implemented by Pragma. Contacts made by the company during the fair in Kabul resulted in a contract with an Afghan company to supply furniture for a school in the Badakshan region of Afghanistan. Under a \$46,500 contract, Doro's subsidiary Art Echo will supply 400 sets of school furniture to the Afghan company Koofab Limited.



*Doro was one of three SMEs that USAID's project selected to attend the Rebuild Afghanistan Exhibition in November 2005.  
Photo: EDP*

Doro had been selected by USAID to attend the Afghanistan Trade Fair at the end of last year. The company is a well-known retailer in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. It specializes in office equipment, computers, furniture, mobile phones, and other electronic goods. Doro's subsidiary Art Echo, which manufactures school and office furniture, has been an EDP client since June 2004 when the USAID project helped the company to prepare its strategic action plan.

## **Uzbekistan**

### **New Law on Credit Unions Will Facilitate Growth of Small and Medium Businesses**

The Government of Uzbekistan recently drafted a new Law on Credit Unions that includes significant input from USAID. The law expands the definition of a credit union to include a broader range of services; grants rights to credit unions to establish regional branches and service points and to conduct leasing operations; increases authorities and responsibilities for the members of credit union boards; and entitles credit unions to issue loans secured by guarantees by third parties. USAID's Development of Saving and Credit Unions Project, implemented by the World Council of Credit Unions, and the USAID-supported Uzbekistan Association of Credit Unions were invited to participate in the preparation of the law's amendments, which were adopted by the Legislative Chamber of Oliy Majlis (Uzbek Parliament).

USAID has been supporting credit unions since the beginning of the credit union movement in 2002. USAID's project assisted in creating the credit unions, and continues to provide support to improve their



services. In addition to support to individual credit unions, the project provides financial and technical assistance to Uzbekistan's Association of Credit Unions, which assists the development of legal documents to stimulate credit union activity and train credit union staff.

### **USAID Helps Implement Uzbekistan's National HIV/AIDS Program**

To facilitate the implementation of Uzbekistan's National HIV/AIDS Program, the USAID Central Asian Program on AIDS Control and Intervention Targeting Youth and High-Risk Groups (CAPACITY) recently assigned its staff to work with an entity implementing Uzbekistan's grant from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. The country is currently carrying out the second year of the five-year, \$25 million grant that supports HIV treatment and prevention activities nationwide. This grant is implemented by Uzbekistan's Republican AIDS Center, a government organization with limited staff and funding. The USAID project will pay salaries for its three staff who now will work for the AIDS Center to provide much needed technical expertise in the areas of communications, community outreach, and monitoring and evaluation. In addition to their personal knowledge, these specialists will facilitate the Center's communication with CAPACITY, to help bring expertise from the region and the United States to Uzbekistan's HIV/AIDS programs. This cooperation represents a significant step in a continuing process of stewardship that CAPACITY began more than one year ago to help Uzbekistan meet the challenges in its fight to stop the spread of HIV.



*Youth is one of several target audiences for USAID HIV/AIDS prevention programs.  
Photo: AED/START/Turkmenistan*

### **Public Education Improves Maternal and Child Health in Ferghana Valley**

In cooperation with the Ministry of Health of Uzbekistan, the USAID Healthy Communities Support Program has recently refocused its efforts in Uzbekistan on building public awareness and capacity to improve community-defined maternal and child health problems in three Ferghana Valley regions. The project was modified in response to serious health problems in rural areas throughout the Ferghana Valley. This development represents a significant change in the Ministry of Health's position. For years, USAID has advocated for Uzbekistan's healthcare system to be focused more on primary healthcare than treatment by specialists, and for an increased role of communities and civil society in safeguarding public health. The Healthy Communities Support Program has been jointly designed to address these goals.

The project, implemented by Counterpart International, will complement the efforts of another USAID program, ZdravPlus, which is also working on maternal and child health issues in Ferghana Valley. The Healthy Communities Support Program will focus on increasing connections between community members, rural medical facilities, and NGOs to address their health issues. It will help communities to understand maternal and child health problems, and the varied roles that different groups can play in addressing them, as well as providing material assistance to village councils to support these community health projects.



*Maternal and child health is one of the key areas of USAID health sector assistance in Uzbekistan.  
Photo: ZdravPlus*